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ABSTRACT

This annotated bibliography includes a separate entry for each of 57 research reports written about the General Educational Development (GED) tests. For inclusion, documents were required to meet three criteria. They must: (1) focus on outcomes of GED graduation; (2) present some form of empirical, research-based evidence concerning the outcomes of GED graduation; and (3) constitute a primary research report rather than a secondary commentary on someone else's report. The documents are arranged in chronological order, from 1953 to 1992. Each annotation provides this information: title; author(s); date; publication information; overview; methodology; summary of findings; and critique of study. A preface reaches the conclusion that of the 57 "flawed" tests of the GED, the GED passed at least 40 of them with flying colors. Author and subject indexes are appended. These subjects are indexed: affective outcomes, education outcomes, economic outcomes, family-related outcomes, and military performance. (YLB)

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ED 365 796

Outcomes of GED Graduation: An Annotated Bibliography of Research Reports

by

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Preface

For fifty years, the GED tests have served an important social function in North American society. Starting as a mechanism for recognizing the learning accomplishments of military personnel after World War Two, the tests expanded rapidly into the civilian sector. In recent years, roughly one out of seven diplomas awarded in the United States has been based on performance on the GED tests. Obviously, there was--and is--a pressing need for a "second chance" diploma in our democracies. Without such an option, millions of adults would pay a permanent penalty for decisions made in their youths.

Those of us involved in adult literacy education understand how deeply the GED tests affect the lives of adult learners. Although the American Council on Education is scrupulous in asserting that the GED program is not an instructional program, in reality, the content of the tests clearly serve as the *de facto* curriculum of much of the adult literacy education that occurs in the United States. Most literacy educators can tell dozens of stories about the GED's impact on the lives of individual learners. For good or bad, millions of adults carry with them the stigma of dropout. They enter literacy programs feeling somehow less than whole--too often defining themselves, not in terms of their many accomplishments, but in terms of the one thing they did not do: finish high school. And, if these adults are able to meet the difficult challenge of the GED tests, they strut--absolutely strut--across the stage at the GED graduation ceremonies that occur across this continent.

Anyone with an iota of sense knows that the GED is not a panacea for troubled lives. In the same way that undereducation in America cannot be explained by any one factor, the consequences and correlates of undereducation cannot be eliminated by any single event, no matter how profound. Passing the GED tests does not, in and of itself, get anyone a job, make anyone a better parent, or bring about the many other changes that seem to happen with regularity after GED graduation. Rather, it is the graduates themselves who make these things happen, through their own efforts and their new-found self-confidence. The GED diploma can remove certain very real barriers to such changes, but the most profound barrier it removes is the self-limiting beliefs of many high school dropouts.

Even though no reasonable educator expects the GED to work miracles, many educators were alarmed when, in late 1991, certain news began to circulate among the community of adult educators whose efforts are affected by the credibility of the GED tests. A new study out of a high-powered research institution reported that, with respect to earnings, GED graduates performed more like dropouts than like traditional high school graduates. What made matters worse was the seemingly vicious slant of early drafts of the

report. Claims were made that a GED diploma was incredibly easy to obtain--something that made little sense in light of the rigorous norming procedures used by the tests' developers and the experiences of students and teachers across this continent. Moreover the language and tone of those early drafts were unblushingly unscholarly: In one version, we were told that even the GED could not make "a silk purse out of a sow's ear."

Though I'm enough of a scholar to accept unpleasant findings, I'm also enough of an adult education advocate to sense when researchers' unarticulated agenda is to attack the very existence of social programs in our notoriously unequal society. On behalf of all the sow's ears out there--many of whom are now clearly silk purses--I felt a real sense of anger. And, as a researcher who is reasonably familiar with a large number of GED follow-up studies with positive results, it seemed strange to me to afford so much attention to a single study--based on a single population at one point in time--simply because it carried discouraging news.

After some thought, I approached the staff at the GED Testing Service with a modest proposal. The proposal was not to attempt to refute the new study or to attempt to discover flaws in the methodology; others had already done that marvelously well. Instead, I reasoned that, for many years, people had been studying outcomes of the GED graduation. Unfortunately, many of these studies were reported in fugitive documents--unpublished theses and dissertations, project reports, program evaluations, and so on. It seemed to me that the surest way for a person to determine the worth of a GED diploma was to look at a large number of studies rather than to rely on any single one.

This bibliography, and the accompanying collection of research reports, are the end-result of my proposal to the GED Testing Service. In the planning stages, the lead author on this work, Mark Johnson (himself a former sow's ear), and I were quickly faced with the need to choose among the many pieces written about the GED tests on a host of topics. We developed the following criteria to guide us in deciding which pieces to include:

-In order to be included here, a document had to focus on outcomes of GED graduation. Notably absent here are the many studies treating the acceptance of a GED credential by employers and colleges.

-In order to be included here, a document must present some form of empirical, research-based evidence concerning the outcomes of GED graduation. Thus, polemical essays and the many, many GED "success stories" that have been published are not covered in this work.

-In order to be included here, a document must be a primary research report rather than a secondary commentary on someone else's research. We violated this criteria once or twice, but always with a reason. For example, Passmore's excellent critique of the methodologies used in GED follow-up studies simply seemed too relevant to exclude.

When we started the project, we predicted that there might be as many as three dozen such research reports in this area. Ultimately, this was a serious underestimation, but we found this out only because of the thoroughness of Mark's work. He spent long hours searching computer databases, ransacking the vertical files at GED Testing Service, calling university libraries and state departments, and generally engaging in a free-form, scavenger hunt to locate every relevant document available. Ultimately, of the more than one hundred "candidate documents" seriously considered for inclusion, fifty-seven met the above-stated criteria for inclusion.

As will be seen, this bibliography includes a separate entry for each of these fifty-seven pieces. As was the case with the searching, Mark did the lion's share of critique writing; if he was the critic, I was the critic's critic, offering occasional advice as needed. In preparing this work, we relied heavily on the computer expertise of Baiyin Yang, the editorial skills of Tom Rutkowski, and the ever-reliable clerical support of Linda Chester and Denise Collins.

Despite the fact that, as the foregoing paragraphs make pretty obvious, we are hardly disinterested with respect to the credibility of the GED tests, the bibliography is not intended to be polemical in nature. Rather, it represents an attempt to critique each work on its own merits, summarizing the essence of each research report and highlighting what we believe to be its strengths and weaknesses. Anyone reading this bibliography is urged to consult the original research documents, all of which are contained in the "mini-library" we compiled during this project. The mini-library is housed at the GED Testing Service in Washington, DC.

The research critiqued here represents a very mixed bag. Very little of it is "high scholarship." Here are some of the more common flaws found in many of these studies:

1. Studies were often conducted by researchers interested in demonstrating the success of the GED program; the biases, both subtle and blatant, that result cannot be ignored. This would tend to inflate GED outcomes.

2. Many, if not most, of the studies suffer from problems with response rate; systematic response bias in favor of the GED program is a distinct possibility.

3. Many of the studies (including my own) employ self-report data. Social desirability could easily result in an overestimation of GED outcomes.

4. Many of the studies employ samples small enough or specialized enough to rule out any attempt at true generalizability.

5. Follow-up researchers are often confronted with the dilemma of when is the best time to collect outcome data. On one hand, they want to allow enough time for benefits to accrue. On the other hand, even one year after graduation, graduates can be difficult to locate. Most research reported here used short enough timeframes to suppress meaningful outcomes.

6. The way in which certain survey questions are asked often results in the underestimation of outcomes. I illustrate this in the outcome study I did with Gordon Darkenwald, which is listed in the bibliography. When we asked a sample of graduates if they now set a better example for their children, 49.5% said that they did. However, only 50% of the sample had children. The more meaningful finding is that 99% of respondents with children said they now set a better example for them. Unfortunately, many researchers will not report how many respondent were eligible for a given benefit when they report the percentage who obtained it. This frequently happens with "finding a job" and "getting off of public assistance."

So, after reading all of these studies, what might one conclude? Look at it this way: Given fifty-seven flawed tests, the GED passed at least forty of them with flying colors. For me, at least, that's enough to override the flaws of individual studies and convince me that some very positive things are happening in the lives of GED graduates. But then again, I already knew that.

Tom Valentine
Athens, Georgia

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Title

The Comparative Achievement of Veterans Admitted to Indiana University on the Basis of the General Educational Development Tests and a Selected Group of Other Indiana University Students

Author(s)

D'Amico, L. A.

Date

1953

Publication Information

Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Indiana University.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to investigate the academic achievement of veterans admitted to Indiana University on the basis of the GED and compare them with regular high school graduates.

Methodology

The study was carried out by an analysis of data relating to the academic achievement of 307 male veteran GED graduates and 307 regular high school graduates admitted to Indiana University from February, 1946 to September, 1950. The data were gathered from the records of the university department of admissions and records. Mean unweighted grade point averages (MUGPR) were obtained and compared in relation to intelligence quotient, size of home town, time lapsed since last high school attendance, age, and university program in which enrolled.

The study used measures of correlation to determine the relationship between: (a) the standard scores on each of the five GED tests and the MUGPR in each of five college subject areas, (b) the average GED test battery scores and MUGPR on the five related college subject areas, and (c) the relationship between the average test battery standard scores and MUGPR in all college subjects taken by the GED students.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered the author found that:

1. The GED group tended to have significantly lower MUGPR than the non-GED group.

2. Approximately 41% of the GED students and 34% of non-GED students did not progress beyond the first year of college.

3. Both groups earned MUGPR corresponding to "c" or better in Arts and Sciences, Business, Education and other schools. One exception was in the school of Health, Physical Education, and Recreation where both groups earned unweighted MUGPR's slightly below "C".

4. The non-GED students attained more college degrees (54)% than GED students (46%). (p.96-98)

On the basis of the data gathered the author concluded that while entrance to college based on traditional high school attendance is the desired practice, college admission to older and more mature adults based on GED results is an acceptable practice.

Critique of Study

This study was one of the first to examine comparative data on the achievement of GED and traditional high school graduates in postsecondary education. The GED population was limited to male veterans at one institution. The study may be useful to those interested in the outcomes of the GED, both from an empirical and historical point of view .

Title	Conclusions and Recommendations on a Study of the General Educational Development Testing Program
Author(s)	Tyler, R.
Date	1956
Publication Information	Washington D.C.: American Council on Education.
Overview	The purpose of this study was to gather data regarding the status of the United States Armed Forces Institute (USAFI) testing program. Because the GED tests were the most widely used of these, the primary focus of the study was on them. The goal of the study was not to suggest ways of improving the program, but to turn over the findings to the American Council on Education (ACE). ACE would then evaluate the data and make recommendations concerning procedures to improve the testing program for both service personnel and civilians.
Methodology	The data in this study were gathered in a variety of ways. The Tyler Fact-Finding group relied on the military, secondary and higher education institutions, industry and business, and their own surveys to compile the report.

Summary of Findings

The findings of this study, in terms of education and employment, were positive. The study found that 47% of the examinees in 1954 took the tests for educational purposes and 38% for further employment qualification. While there are many facts and figures available from this study, some of its significance may lie in the repeated warnings that while the GED provides a "valid means of measuring competence of the non-high school graduate at the high school level"(p.19) it is not the same as a high school education.

Critique of Study

This study was a major undertaking at a relatively early stage of the development of the GED program. The extensive overview of the program provides a historical context for those interested in the GED in general and outcomes in particular.

Title

The General Educational Development (GED) High School Equivalency Program in Colorado

Author(s)

Pipho, C.C.

Date

1965

Publication Information

Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, Colorado State College, Greeley.

Overview

The study conducted a formal evaluation of the GED High School Equivalency Certification Program in Colorado. The original intent of the GED Program was to help service men and women receive high school credit for their service experience. By the time of this project the program was primarily serving civilians. Because of this change in purpose it was deemed appropriate that a study be conducted in order to help determine the future of the program.

Methodology

The study was divided into four sections using the following data collection methods:

1. A follow-up survey of 369 people who received a high school equivalency certificate using six selected response items related to current use of the certification.

2. A survey of the amount of success experienced by 169 equivalency certificate holders in vocational and industrial jobs and 279 equivalency certificate holders in college conducted through employer personnel departments and college admissions and records offices.

3. A historical survey of the growth and changes in the program.

4. A statistical comparison of 483 GED examinees including a point bi-serial correlation of age and last grade completed to passing or failing the test battery, Pearson product-moment correlation, and a factor analysis of the seven variables (continuous) of age, last grade completed, and scores on the five GED tests, and a discriminate analysis of all subtests against sex and last grade completed separated by sex. (pp.v-vi)

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered the author found the following

1. Colorado residents used the GED for job purposes and perform as well as high school graduates in these jobs.

2.The success of GED graduates in college was limited (approximately 20% of GED graduates who enrolled in Colorado colleges were able to graduate). (p. vi)

Critique of Study

The six selected response items related to current use of the GED certificate on the follow-up survey combined with the demographic information solicited provide information that was scarcely available in 1965. The relatively short time between certification and the survey (six months) may limit the value of the data derived. The descriptive and exploratory surveys conducted of colleges and employers yielded relevant data to the questions of academic and job success related to the high school equivalency certification through the GED.

This study is valuable in several ways; it reviewed the work done up to that point that related to outcomes of the GED, it provided groundwork for future studies on the subject, and it may have provided a rationale for the transition of the GED from a primarily military/veterans related program to the more inclusive program of today.

Title

The academic Performance of Students Admitted on the Basis of the General Educational Development Tests to the Middle Tennessee State University

Author(s)

Fugate, C.W.

Date

1972

Publication Information

Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation, University of Mississippi.

Rationale

The study examined the academic performance of successive freshman classes admitted to the Middle Tennessee State University from 1946 to 1966 based on satisfactory achievement on the GED tests.

Methodology

The study was carried out by an analysis of data relating to how well GED and non-GED students performed academically. The study population included 490 GED based admissions from a total of 19,504 students. The researcher presents 18 detailed questions answered by analyzing the data. Included in those questions are: what percentage; graduated in four years, were enrolled five or more years after admission, achieved a "C" average, were placed on probation or suspension, and were eligible to re-enroll but and failed to. These questions were considered both by each entering class and by total GED population.

Summary of Findings

The study found that of the total study population of 490 GED Graduates:

1. 25.1% graduated,
2. 23.9% were placed on probation or suspension,
3. 53% achieved a "C" average or better,
4. 51.4% of those who left the institution failed to re-enroll though eligible to do so.

Critique of Study

The methodology of this study appears to be sound; access to the academic records of both the study population and the entire student population provided data that were useful.

For the purpose of considering the outcomes of the GED, this study provides accurate data with detailed questions. The twenty-two year time frame within which this study was conducted allowed a valuable overview from both a statistical and historical perspective.

The major weakness of the study was the failure to provide information needed in order to compare the study population to the general student population. The absence of comparative data makes this study difficult to interpret.

Title

Achievement and Dropout Rates of GED Students and High School Graduates from Alabama Junior Colleges

Author(s)

Hannah, W.C.

Date

1972

Publication Information

Doctoral dissertation submitted to Mississsippi State University, State College, Mississippi.

Overview

This study sought to determine if there were significant differences in the grade point averages and dropout rates of Alabama Junior College students who were admitted on the basis of the GED and a high school diploma.

Methodology

This study was conducted by collecting data on students admitted to three Alabama Junior Colleges from 1965 through the 1970-71 school year. Following a search of the registrars' records at the three schools it was determined that 1,745 GED students and 35,797 high school graduates (HSG) had been admitted during the six-year time frame. A random sample of 300 GED and 300 high school graduates was chosen. These students' academic records were examined for grade point averages and to determine dropout rates.

The data gathered in this study were analyzed by several methods including the least squares analysis of variance method, Duncan's Multiple Range Test and Chi Square.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the analysis of data, the author found the following:

1. Evidence was found, when mean GPA's of GED and HSG junior college students were compared at the end of one year of attendance, that there was no significant difference between the means.

2. Analysis of variance techniques, when applied to mean GPA's at the end of two years, produced significant differences. The GPA's of GED students were significantly higher than those of the HSG students.

3. The proportion of HSG students who dropped out of school (.60) by the end of the first year was significantly higher than that of the GED students (.47). The Chi Square comparison of these two groups resulted in a significant F ratio. Therefore, the dropout rate was significant.

4. The percentage of HSG who dropped out of school after two years of attendance was significantly different. The Chi Square comparison of dropout rates between these groups resulted in a F ratio which was not significant.

The author concludes "that the GED certificate is a valid substitute for a high school diploma as a credential for admission to the junior colleges in Alabama if GPA is accepted as a criteria for achievement" (p. 74).

Critique of Study

This study was well conducted and examined a sizeable study group over a relatively long period of time. Then author notes that the conclusions are applicable only for students enrolled in junior colleges in Alabama.

Title

The Non-high School Graduate Adult in College and His Success as Predicted by the Tests of General Educational Development

Author(s)

Sharon, A.T.

Date

1972

Publication Information

Princeton, NJ: Educational Testing Service. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service,No. ED 064 306).

Overview

This study examined the success of non-high school graduates in college as predicted by the GED tests. The study had three major objectives:

1. To describe the background and experience of non-high school graduates who enroll in a college on the basis of their GED test scores.

2. To determine the validity of the GED test battery for predicting the success of non-high school graduates at a variety of institutions.

3. To identify the advantages and problems created by granting admission to college by means of the GED tests. (pp. 2-3)

Methodology

The study sought to gather information from institutions of higher learning that admitted substantial numbers of students based on GED test scores. A total of 111 colleges and universities were invited to participate and 40 of those cooperated. These institutions were asked to provide the name, address, date of admission, GED test scores, Scholastic Aptitude Test scores, and cumulative grade-point averages for all students admitted with GED test scores within a two year period prior to the request. A survey was mailed to 1,367 with 538 responding for a response rate of 39%. The survey included questions on biographic and demographic information, including information on experiences with the GED and attitudes toward social issues. No sample of the survey instrument is included in the report.

In addition to the survey, 30 students were included in in-depth, structured interviews with open-ended questions concerning background, experiences with the GED program, experiences in college, and future plans.

Summary of Findings

The author is careful to note the modest response rate (39%) while drawing several conclusions from the data gathered. The primary effect of taking the GED for the non-traditional student was the elimination of a barrier to enrollment in higher education. In addition the test was found to affect some of the students' college, major field, and career.

Critique of Study

The methodology applied in this study was an attempt to improve on research efforts made in this area prior to 1972. The author points out that early research was generally confined to one institution and that it was difficult to generalize across these studies for purposes of comparison. The study does provide information relevant to the consideration of the outcomes of the GED. The access to formal higher education a the prominent outcome as are the selection of a major, choosing a career, helping them get a job, earning more money, and increasing their self-confidence and sense of accomplishment.

The inclusion of the survey instrument would have added clarity to this study. While tables are provided for the consideration of various information, the summary of outcomes or "effects" are presented largely in narrative form.

Title

A comparison of the Educational Success of GED Recipients and Traditional High School Graduates in Selected Areas at Wilkes Community College (North Carolina)

Author(s)

Byrd, F., Hayes, E., Hendix, J., & Simpson, D.

Date

1973

Publication

Practicum presented to Nova University. (ERIC Document Service No. ED 100 439).

Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine if there was a significant difference in the performance level of high school GED graduates and regular high school graduates at Wilkes Community College from 1966 to 1972.

Methodology

The study was conducted by identifying all GED graduates admitted to Wilkes Community College from June 1966 to November 1972 and a random sample of traditional high school graduates admitted during the same period. The academic records of these students and data sets derived by combining reading placement scores on the Nelson-Denny Reading Ability Test and grade point averages in English and Mathematics 111 were used in the study.

A total of 311 GED graduates were identified and a random sample of 50 traditional high school graduates who had taken the Nelson-Denny test and Mathematics and English 111 was drawn. The data were analyzed by examining differences in mean scores and frequency distribution charts and histograms were made for each set of data. Finally a t-test was used to analyze each set of comparative data.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered the following findings were made:

1. In analyzing the mean scores by using a t-test set at the .05 level of significance there were no significant differences in the three comparison areas.

2. The researchers found that both GED and regular high school graduates would benefit from reinforcement in skill needs in the three tested areas.

Critique of Study

The methodology of this study appears to be sound. The use of the term "transfer student"on page 10 conflicts with other descriptions of the traditional high school graduate described throughout the study.

Title

Perceptions of the College of Lake County's G.E.D. Program As Seen By Former Students and Area Employers

Author(s)

Mally, N. and Charuhas, M.

Date

1977

Publication Information

Lake County College, Grayslake, Illinois 60030 (unpublished report). (Eric Document Reproduction Service No. ED 161 471).

Overview

The study was conducted as an informal evaluation of the Lake County College GED preparation course.

Methodology

The study included a survey of all students enrolled in the Lake County College GED preparation class in 1975 and a survey of Lake County employers. A total of 331 questionnaires were mailed to former students and 85 were returned for a response rate of 26%. In addition to the student survey, 100 employer surveys were mailed and 26 were returned for a response rate of 26%. The data collected were used to draw conclusions about student attitudes and employers acceptance of the GED in Lake County.

Summary of Findings

Based on the data gathered, the authors concluded that all of the employers accepted the GED as a substitute for a traditional high school diploma when hiring. In addition, the student respondents felt that the acquisition of the GED had helped them to gain further education, to find a better job, and to increase in their self esteem.

Critique of Study

The study was conducted for the purpose of program planning and development and not specifically towards determining outcomes of the GED. There are elements in both the student and employer surveys that are relevant to outcomes and which may be of interest. This study was intended as an inststutional report rather than a highly polished research report. It is included in this bibliography because of the high response rate from former students and the responses from both students and employers are relevant to the issue of outcomes.

Title

Performance Analysis of Students Admitted to U-W Stevens Point on the Basis of the General Educational Development Examination of High School Equivalency Focus: 1976-77 and 1977-78

Author(s)

Larsen, J.

Date

1979

Publication Information

A report prepared for the Office of Undergraduate Admissions, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine the academic performance of new students admitted to the university based on the GED tests. Two questions guided the research:

1. Have these students been successful in meeting minimal academic standards?

2. Is there a significant cut -off composite score on the GED which predicts success for higher scores and failure for lower scores?

Methodology

This study was conducted by examining the transcripts of the 33 students admitted to the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point during the 1976-1978 academic years on the basis of the GED test scores. The data gathered in this study were analyzed and compiled into tables.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered in this study the author found the following:

1. A relatively high percentage of the students experienced total academic failure by the end of the first semester in attendance. (40%)

2. Those who achieved a first semester grade point ratio of 2.00 or better tended to continue, and to maintain a high cumulative grade point ratio, close to 2.00, many times higher than 2.00.

3. A score of 235 (total GED score) was a dividing line in the measurement of academic success during the important first semester for the students admitted under this program. (p. 13)

Critique of Study

This study was conducted as an internal report for the university. The author notes that the sample was small and the time span of the study was very limited.

Title	A Report of an Adult Education Client Impact Study: A Five Year Follow Up
Author(s)	Moore. L.H.
Date	1980
Publication Information	Murray State University. Murray ,Kentucky. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 208 250).
Overview	The study sought to obtain data to determine the status of GED graduates with respect to; (a) employment, (b) community activities, (c) benefits from the GED, and (d) further education attempted.
Methodology	The survey instrument consisted of demographic information, 31 selected response items, and a section for comments and questions. The survey was mailed to 491 Kentucky GED graduates as identified by the GED testing centers in Paducah and Murray, Kentucky; of the surveys mailed, 254 were returned as undeliverable, 136 were not returned, and 101 were returned in completed form for an adjusted response rate of 28%. The survey instrument is included. An analysis of data for indications of employability, productivity, and responsibility was completed. Analysis consisted of a frequency distribution and cross tabulations of selected variables.
Summary of Findings	Analysis consisted of a frequency distribution and cross tabulations of selected variables. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents (n=69) were working full or part time and 46 reported that their successful completion of the GED had improved their employment. The productivity of the respondents was considered to have improved because 26 individuals joined a community organization and 66 desired further education or training. An increase in

voter registration and a high (78%) marriage rate was considered to be an indication that the respondents had become more responsible citizens.

Critique of Study

The study was conducted by using the records of the GED testing centers in Paducah and Murray, Kentucky to identify the total population of 491 GED graduates from 1975. It is unclear whether the designation, "Adult Students" as used in the study, indicates that the total survey population was made up of those enrolled in a GED preparation course, or all of those who successfully completed the GED. The study provides evidence that indicates that the successful completion of the GED had a positive effect in the areas of employment, education, and self-esteem.

Title: Follow-Up Study of 1980 GED Graduates

Author(s): Jantzen, L., & Quigley, A.

Date: 1981

Publication Information Saskatchewan, Canada: Department of Continuing Education, Community Colleges Branch.

Overview

The purpose of the study was to determine how passing the GED affected the job opportunities, the educational opportunities, and the personal satisfaction of graduates of three colleges in Saskatchewan, Canada in 1980. The study also examines the preparation and counseling offered to the respondents prior to taking the exam.

Methodology

The study was conducted by mailing questionnaires to 274 GED graduates admitted to two rural colleges and 274 GED graduates admitted to an urban college. The total sample of 548 represented the entire GED population of the rural colleges and 50% of the GED graduates from the urban college. Of the 548 surveys mailed a total of 327, or 66%, were returned.

The survey instrument consisted of 12 selected response items and a section for comments and suggestions.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered the authors found the following:

1. Of the 327 respondents 107 (33%) took the GED primarily to increase employment opportunities, 63 (19%) took the GED to increase educational opportunities, 150 (46%) took it for personal satisfaction, and 7 (1%) took it for unstated reasons.

2. Of the 107 respondents who indicated that increased job opportunities was their primary reason for taking the GED, 39 (36%) said it had improved their job prospects considerably. In addition, 23 (21%) indicated that passing the GED helped them get a better job and 25 (23%) said it helped their job promotion prospects.

3. Of the 63 respondents who indicated that increased educational opportunities were their primary reason for taking the test, 16 people (25%) expected increases in their chances for entry in a community college and 22 (35%) said their educational plans had changed considerably or a great deal since attaining their GED.

4. Of the 150 respondents who chose self satisfaction as their primary reason for taking the GED 120 (80%) said their confidence in themselves had increased and 108 (72%) felt that it was a major step in their lives.

Critique of Study

The methodology in this study appears sound, the 66% response rate is higher than many outcome studies. The format of this document includes numerous tables and raw data that may be difficult to work through. The demographic characteristics of the study population may lead to problems with generalizability.

Title

Investigation of the Post-secondary Performance of Adult High School Diploma Graduates and GED Equivalency Graduates in a Two-year Institution

Author(s)

McLawhorn, K.B.

Date

1981

Publication Information

A report to the administration , Southeastern Community College, Whiteville, N.C. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 203 042).

Overview

The purpose of this study was to compare GED recipients with graduates of the Adult High School Diploma program at Southeastern Community College.

Methodology

The study was conducted by mailing a questionnaire to 75 of the 161 GED graduates at Southeastern Community College from 1977-1979; 39 responses were received for a response rate of 52%. The survey instrument consisted of ten items measuring possible reasons for choosing one of the high school diploma programs and one open-ended question concerning personal and educational goal attainment was included. In order to compare GED graduates and high school graduates, the grade point averages, type of program, and college graduation rates of both groups were gathered from the college office of admissions and records.

Summary of Findings

Based on the data gathered, the authors found the following:

1. Students chose the GED program for reasons of personal satisfaction, no study time element, and short term convenience.

2.The Adult High School Diploma graduate had a slightly higher GPA, 2.58, than did the GED graduate, 2.21. (p.16)

Critique of Study

This study did not specifically address GED outcomes, but the two items mentioned in the summary of findings may be of interest to those considering this issue.

Title: Three Studies of General Educational Development (GED) Students 1971-1981

Author(s): Swarm, C.C.

Date: 1981

Publication Information (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. 211 696).

Overview

Although this paper deals with three studies only one is described in depth. Study #3 (in this document) sought to determine the ability of GED graduates to succeed in college.

Methodology

A survey was mailed to GED graduates attending college in 5 states. It is reported that of the 981 surveys mailed, 56% responded to the questionnaire. Although the survey instrument was not provided Appendix I catalogs 21"traits" that were investigated. These included demographic, employment, and educational characteristics.

Summary of Findings

As a result oft he data gathered in these studies the following was found:

1. 48% took the GED and enrolled in college for reasons of personal satisfaction, 23.3% to fulfill employment prerequisites, and 28.7% for job promotion.

2. Nearly 70% indicated they were performing at "c" level or better.

These findings led the author to conclude that "GED students overall do not appear to be educationally disadvantaged . . .and that they are comparable to standard high school graduates" (p. 21).

Critique of Study

This study is problematic in a number of ways. It is unclear as to who authored which of the three studies included, there is sparse information about the methodology and analysis of the data, and the conclusions are difficult to interpret. The response rate was good but the lack of detail in the document makes it difficult to judge the research.

Title

A Study of the Relationship Between Educational Credentials and Military Performance Criteria

Author(s)

Elster, R. & Flyer, E.

Date

1982

Publication Information

Report No. NPS54-82-008. Monterey, CA: Naval Postgraduate School.

Overview

This study compared high school graduates,GED certificate holders, and non-high school graduates with respect to behavioral and performance criteria available during initial tours of active duty.

Methodology

Predictor data were obtained from military enlistment and Job Corps data files containing information on all enlistees. Criterion variables were obtained from DOD historic data bases that show the status of active duty personnel every calendar quarter. Criteria included attrition, advancement, and retention information available in these records at the one, two, three , and four year service marks. Analysis was performed by sex, race, and aptitude level.

Summary of Findings:

On the basis of the data gathered the authors found the following:

1.Average scores on the Armed Services d Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) were higher for GED holders and high school graduates that for non-graduates. The average scores of high school graduates were higher on academically oriented subjects but lower on vocationally oriented subjects than the GED graduates.

2. GED holders and high school graduates were more often assigned to mechanical and electrical occupations while non-high school graduates were most often assigned to combat-oriented occupations

3. On average high school graduates fared better in terms of pay grade than did GED holders. GED holders in turn attained a higher pay grade than did non-high school graduates.

4. About 50% of entering groups of GED holders leave the military by the end of three years of active duty. This rate is similar to that of non-high school graduates and much more than that of traditional high school graduates.

5. Statistically controlling for mental ability based on ASVAB scores does not eliminate the differences in attrition rates among groups. (pp. v-2 - v-9).

Critique Of Study

This was a highly detailed study conducted for the Armed Forces of the United States. The methodology appears very sound and the reporting of the analysis of data is comprehensive and clear.

Title

A Follow-up Study of Adults Who Were Administered the General Educational Development Test in Kentucky During 1976

Author(s)

Moore, L.

Date

1982

Publication Information

Murray, KY: Murray State University (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 225 583).

Overview

The purpose of this study was to measure the impact of involvement with the GED program on Kentucky adults who were administered the tests in 1976. Unlike many GED studies this project sought to measure the impact of taking the tests on both successful and unsuccessful GED candidates' completion. The study also sought to measure the impact of adult education programs on the GED candidate.

Methodology

In order to measure the impact of the GED program on both successful and unsuccessful candidates, the the researcher identified the two samples. In 1976 there were 20,524 adults tested; 13,060 received GED credentials and 7,464 did not. The random selection of the successful candidates was done from the Kentucky Department of Education files. The unsuccessful candidates were identified by a random cluster sample of the state testing centers.

A total of 660 successful candidates were mailed surveys and 184 or 28% were returned. A total of 557 surveys were mailed to the unsuccessful candidates and 85 were returned. The entire survey included 1217 questionnaires mailed with 269 responses for a response rate of 22%. The survey instrument consisted of 16 selected response items and one section for comments and suggestions. The survey instrument is included. A separate cover letter was sent to the successful and unsuccessful candidates.

The data were analyzed by composite frequency distributions of the total group. In addition, the successful and unsuccessful groups were coded for separation and comparison between the groups. Cross tabulations and chi-square values were obtained for numerous comparisons using 2x2 tables with one degree of freedom and a statistical significance level set at the .05 level. (p. 17)

Two hypotheses were tested, one concerning outcomes and one concerning preparation. The hypothesis concerning outcomes was stated as follows:

> "If a GED candidate successfully completed the GED, then a significant difference will be indicated in employment, responsibility, and productivity when compared with the unsuccessful candidate" (p. 19).

Summary of Findings

Based on the data gathered in this study the authors found that:

1. The employment status of the successful GED candidate is significantly better than that of the unsuccessful candidate.

2. As measured by voting activities, successful GED candidates are more willing to participate in the democratic process than are unsuccessful candidates. (pp.19-28)

Critique of Study

This study was far reaching in its attempt to follow up not only successful GED candidates, but unsuccessful ones as well. The methodology appears sound with the exception of the fact that the survey instrument was identical for each group. The differential response rate of the two groups is problematic. The researcher notes that there may have been a reluctance to relive a negative experience. Had the survey instrument for the unsuccessful group been specifically oriented toward them, the response rate might have improved.

Title

GED Graduate Study

Author(s)

Moraine Valley Community College

Date

1982

Publication Information

Moraine Valley Community College, 10900 South 88th Avenue, Palos Hills, Illinois 60465.

Overview

This study was conducted in order to solicit information from Moraine Valley Community College GED graduates about the GED program and its effect on their lives.

Methodology

A survey was mailed to 321 GED graduates from the year 1981, with 163 responses for a response rate of 51%. The survey instrument consisted of 14 selected response and 2 open ended response items. A single question yielded data used to draw conclusions about the college GED program. The survey instrument was included.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered, the following was found: (a) 77.4% reported an increase in self confidence, (b) 67% stated that the completion of the GED allowed them to continue their education, and (c) 10% said that it had helped them get a better job.

Critique of Study

This study was not specifically aimed at the issue of outcomes,but the single question regarding that issue on the survey yielded data that could be useful in the consideration of that issue.

Title

Longitudinal Comparison of GED and High School Graduate'S Post-secondary Educational Success

Author(s)

Willett, L.H.

Date

1982

Publication Information

Adult Literacy and Basic Education, 6, 218-219.

Overview

The purpose of this investigation was to determine the educational success of GED-prepared students with high school diploma students who were admitted to a two-year public community college.

Methodology

This study was conducted by randomly selecting 68 GED prepared students and 68 high school diploma students from the entering freshman class of 1976 at Elgin Community College in Elgin, Illinois. Four dependent variables were used to compare educational success:

1. Cumulative grade point average.
2. Graduation rate.
3. Re-enrollment frequency.
4. Earned credit hours.

The data were gathered from the Admissions and Records department of Elgin Community College. The persistence rates, credit hours completed, and withdrawal courses of the two samples were analyzed. For purposes of further comparison, cumulative grade point averages over a five-year research period were analyzed. Chi-square analysis was used for all comparisons except the grade point average, which was analyzed using the t-test. The level of significance for both statistical tests was set at 05.

Summary of Findings

As a result of the analysis of data at the end of the five year research period, the author found the following:

1. There was no statistically significant difference in the re-enrollment rate for the two groups.

2. There was no statistically significant difference in the number of credit hours earned by the two groups.

3. There was no statistically significant difference in the cumulative grade-point averages earned by the two groups.

4. There was no statistically significant difference in the graduation rate of the two groups.

The author warns of several possible limitations in the study; (a) there was no control for academic aptitude within the groups, (b) lack of information about students who may have continued their educations at another institution, and (c) the success was confined to educational outcomes.

Critique of Study

This was a well designed and implemented study. In addition to the limitations stated by the author it should be noted that the study was confined to a single institution. The focus of the research on educational outcomes makes it particularly valuable.

Title

After the GED tests: Postsecondary Education Enrollment Patterns and Perceptions of GED Examinees

Author(s)

Behal, E.L.

Date

1983

Publication Information

GEDTS Research Studies, No. 5, 1983. Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No, ED 272 755).

Overview

The purpose of this study was to investigate if participants in a follow-up study of GED examinees pursued postsecondary education.

Methodology

The study was conducted by randomly selecting 20% of the participants of the Spring 1980 study (1845) who had indicated a willingness to participate in the follow-up study and mailing each a survey. There were a total of 647 responses for a 35% response rate. The survey instrument included four pages of selected response items with several items including in a space for open ended responses. The survey instrument was included.

Summary of Findings

Based on the data gathered in the study the author found that of the 49% of respondents who enrolled in postsecondary education::

1. 28% enrolled in community or junior college,

2. 17% enrolled in technical school,

3. 13% enrolled in trade school,

4. 16% enrolled in apprenticeship or on-the-job-training, and

5. 6% enrolled in a four year college or university.

In addition it was found that "there was no statistically significant difference between the ages of those who had enrolled in postsecondary education and those who had not" (p. 4). It was noted that the "35 to 39 year age group had a higher enrollment in technical schools, apprenticeships, and on the job training" (p. 4). In relation to gender, 57% of the respondents were women, but" gender was not strongly related to enrollment patterns. . . with the exception of attendance at four year colleges or universities"(p. 4), where there was a higher percentage of women and technical schools where there was a higher percentage of men.

Critique of Study

This was a straight forward study that focused on enrollment patterns of GED examinees. The information in the study is presented in a clear manner. The response rate is comparable to many follow-up studies but the fact the respondents previously agreed to participate may present some problems with response bias.

Title

Acceptance of General Educational Development (GED) in Hiring Policies of Denver Area Employees

Author(s)

Carson, B. W.

Date

1983

Publication Information

Unpublished Dissertation, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley ,Colorado.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the GED credential: (a) increased the employability of an individual, (b) makes any types of jobs available that might not have been available without an educational credential, (c) increased the possibility of a promotion or, (d) increases the possibility of a pay raise or salary increase. (p. 2)

Methodology

The study was conducted by mailing a questionnaire to 360 major employers in the Denver area. The response rate was 51% with 181 questionnaires returned. Major employers was defined as those firms with more than 250 employees. The survey instument is included, it includes questions about the:

1. hiring of new employees ,
2. types of jobs available,
3. promotions and pay raises ,and
4. demographic information.

Data derived from the returned questionnaires was tabulated and analyzed and conclusions were drawn.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered, the author found the following:

1. 96% of the respondents accepted the GED credential, and 83% considered the GED and a high school diploma equally when all other factors are the same,

2. 41% indicated that some positions are available only to those with a GED or high school diploma,

3. the respondents were equally divided about whether or not the GED would enhance the chances for a promotion, and

4. 96% of the respondents did not reward pay increases upon the completion of the GED.

Critique of Study

The study requested information from Denver area employers with 250 or more employees thereby including 575,000 persons, or approximately 70% of the total work force. The author notes that despite the relatively high response rate (51%) the construction industry is under represented because the unions control the hiring in that area.

This study suggests that the GED is a viable alternative to a high school diploma for the purpose of gaining employment in the Denver area, and that it is less important than other factors in gaining promotions or pay increases once employment is secured. This information could be helpful in the consideration of the outcomes of the GED.

Title

After the GED tests: Employment and Training Activities of GED Examinees

Author(s)

Cervero, R.M. & Peterson, N.L.

Date

1982

Publication Information

GED Testing Service Research Studies, No. 4. Washington D.C: American Council on Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 272 754)

Overview

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of passing the GED test on adults' employment and participation in educational activities.

Methodology

The study was conducted as a follow-up to a 1980 survey of 9,530 GED candidates; a twenty percent sample of this group was mailed the follow-up survey in October, 1981. Of these, 351 were returned as undeliverable. The 458 responses resulted in an adjusted response rate of 29.5 %. The data gathered in this study were assembled in tabular form and used for both comparative and explanatory purposes.

The survey instrument included 61 selected response items and one open-ended item asking for opinions and comments about the GED's impact on the respondent's life. The survey instrument is included.

Summary of Findings

Based on the data gathered, the authors found the following:

1. The GED candidates were extremely positive about their GED experiences: 95% said they would probably take the test again if they were starting over.

2. More people expected the GED to help them achieve a new job (75%) than to improve their situation in their current job (30%). The findings confirm this expectation with the GED being more of a help in finding a new job than in improving a current job situation.

3. More people expected the GED to help them gain admittance to an educational institution (73%) than to on-the-job training or an apprenticeship program (52%). The responses indicated that this expectation was borne out: 51% were admitted to educational institutions and 24% were involved in on-the job training or apprenticeships. During the 18 months following the initial survey, 45% of the respondents had enrolled in some type of educational program and over 75% had plans to do so in the future. (p.1)

Critique of Study

The study is clearly written and the methodology appears sound. The major problem in the study is the relatively low response rate of 29.5%. The problem of low response rate, which plagues many studies of this kind, carries with it the threat of systematic response bias.

Title A National Survey of GED Test Candidates: Preparation, Performance and Outcomes

Author(s) Cervero, R. M.

Date 1983

Publication Information Adult Literacy and Basic Education, 7, 13-24

Note
This is essentially a journal form of the research included in Document No. 20.

Title	A National Survey of GED Test Candidates: Preparation, Performance and Outcomes
Author(s)	Cervero, R. M.
Date	1983
Publication Information	A paper presented at the annual conference of the America

NOTE
This is a essentially a presentation version of the research reported in Document No. 20.

Title

High School Equivalency and High School Diploma Students at Brandon University: A Comparison of Academic Success

Author(s)

Colert, S.

Date:

1983

Publication Information

GED Research Brief No.5. Washington D.C.: American Council on Education

Overview

The purpose of this study was to compare the academic success of GED graduates and regular high school diploma graduates enrolled in Brandon University , Manitoba in 1982-1983.

Methodology

This study was conducted by identifying 27 high school equivalency graduates by a manual search of school admission files and selecting 27 regular high school diploma students by a systematic random sampling of all students' admissions for the designated time period. (One high school equivalency graduate dropped out during the study, reducing the equivalency group to 26). The data collected from the admissions and records department were:

1. Grade point average,
2. Credit hour attempted,
3. Credit hours passed.

The grade point averages were tabulated and frequency distributions were determined for each group. The number of credit hours attempted and passed were tabulated and a ratio of hours attempted to hours passed was calculated. Finally, the averages of the credit hour ratios and the standard deviations for each group was determined. The two null hypotheses were:

1. There is no statistically significant difference in the distribution of the mean grade point averages of high school equivalency and high school diploma students attending Brandon University.

2. There is no statistically significant difference in the average of credit hours passed to credit hours attempted by high school equivalency and high school diploma students attending Brandon University. (p. 1)

Both null hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov goodness of fit test was used to analyze grade point average scores and the two-tailed t-test was used to analyze credit hour ratios.

Summary of Findings

As a result of the analysis of the data the author found the following:

1. There was found to be no statistically significant difference in the distribution of grade point averages between the two groups of students.

2. Although the mean credit hours passed to mean credit hours attempted were higher for diploma students, it was not found to be statistically significant. (pp. 1-2)

Critique of Study

The author is careful to note that the study was limited to a small number of students at one institution. It was recommended that further studies be conducted and that moderator variables be considered. Although the study was limited to one central question, it was well conceived and the results were clearly presented.

Title What is a GED Worth?

Author(s) King, J. & Meeker,R.

Date 1984

Publication Information Curriculum Publications Clearing House, Western Illinois University Macomb, IL 61455.

Overview

This was a multi-faceted study which sought to determine the what the GED is worth to GED graduates. In order to do so five groups were surveyed about that issue. The data in this study that related directly to outcomes was derived from the follow-up study of GED graduates.

Methodology

The survey of GED graduates was mailed to 452 individuals who had been served by the Bloomington-Normal, Illinois Adult Education Program in 1982-1983 and had subsequently passed the the GED. A total of 135 of the surveys were returned for a response rate of 29.9%. The survey instrument consisted of 12 items soliciting demographic information as well as selected response items about outcomes as well as expectations and attitudes relating to their successful completion of the GED. The Survey instrument is included.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered, the authors found that of the 135 respondents:

1. 27% had applied for a job,

2. 18% had been hired or promoted, and

3. while 20% indicated that applying for admission to postsecondary education was the most important reason for taking the test, only 9% actually had done so.

Critique of Study

While this was a broad and ambitious study there are problems with the methodology relating to outcomes. The focus of the portion of the follow-up study which relates to outcomes examines employment and educational issues. 55% of the respondents were employed when they took the tests, it is unclear how many of that group are included in the catagories cencerning job application or hiring history. The response rate and structure of the questionnaire present potential response bias problems.

Title

Educational and Occupational Activities of GED and Conventional High School Graduates in Florida

Author(s)

Ladner, R.

Date

1984

Publication Information

Coral Gables, FL: Behavioral Sciences Research Institute.

Overview

The purpose of this study is to compare two types of high school GED Graduates, "early exit" and "second chance", with conventional high school graduates.

Methodology

The study was conducted with a questionnaire developed and administered by the Behavioral Sciences Research Group and approved by the Florida State Advisory Council. The survey sample was drawn from the 1982-1983 listings of conventional high school graduates from each of 67 school districts in Florida and from the 64 GED testing centers throughout the state. The survey instrument is included. A total of 503 early exit, 500 second chance, and 506 conventional graduates were interviewed by telephone. The data gathered were reviewed, coded, edited, and entered on to disc files for computer analysis at the Southeast Regional Data Analysis Center (SERDAC) at Florida International University.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data analysis the the author found the following:

1. Between 69% and 73% of all groups were engaged in full or part time employment. The conventional high school graduate did not enjoy an advantage in terms of employability in this study.

2. Conventional graduates were more likely to be attending post-secondary school than either group of GED graduates. Almost half of the conventional graduates (44%) were either attending college or vocational training while 21% and 22% of second chance and early exits, respectively, were so engaged.

Critique of Study

This study of three types of high school graduates included a large sample group, but the method of gathering data may present problems of response bias. The number of variables related to outcomes are limited.

Title

Characteristics and Performance of Recruits Enlisted with General Educational Development (GED) Credentials

Author(s)

Means, B. & Laurence , J.H.

Date

1984

Publication Information

Human Resources Research Organization, 1100 South Washington Street, Alexandria, VA. Final Report 84-6 HumRRO FR-PRD 84-6.

Overview

The study was commissioned by the U.S. Department of Defense in order to determine the appropriateness of military enlistment policies in regard to the GED. The report was intended to be a reference document.

Methodology

The data gathered for this study came from several sources. The Defense Manpower Data Center files and GED Testing Service records were linked in order to permit analysis of a five year period of military accessions. In addition, HumRRO's Educational and Biographical Information Survey was a source of limited information on the study group.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered, the authors found the following

1. Male accessions who are GED holders have 36-month total and adverse attrition rates roughly twice as large as those of diploma graduates.

2. For the FY 1977 and 1978 cohorts of male non-prior service accessions, high school graduates served an average of 5.5 months longer than GED holders. For those entering service in FY 1979, the difference was 3.4 months.

3. For the four groups analyzed, high school graduates were from 3 to 12 percent more likely than GED holders to be in service after completion of their initial terms.

4. The examination of possible artifactual sources for the "GED- high school graduate attrition gap" found no extraneous variable that could account for a large part of those attrition differences.(p. vi-vii.)

The authors recommend further study to determine characteristics associated with military adaptability in order to improve recruitment policies.

Critique of Study

This is a highly detailed report containing numerous data represented on tables and graphs. The results of the study are clearly stated and supportive of the military enlistment criteria vis-a-vis the GED. The authors recommend further study in order to determine relevant characteristics.

Title

Impact of the Successful Completion of the GED on Candidates and Their Employers

Author(s)

Thiele, J.E & Sloan, C.A.

Date

1984

Publication Information

(ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 244 051).

Overview

The purpose of this study was to analyze the impact of the successful completion of the GED on candidates and their employers in De Kalb County, Illinois from 1970-1979.

Methodology

In order to obtain the data for this study,surveys were devised and mailed to 428 GED graduates and 88 employers. A total of 241 or 56% of graduates and 52 or 59% of employers resonded to the survey. The survey instruments were not included in the report but the researchers do list the following questions asked of candidates and employers:

Candidates

1. Did they change their employment within two years of finishing the GED?

2. Did they enter into academic, technical, or apprentice programs following GED completion?

3. Why did they wish to take the GED?

Employers

1. Did they find their GED employees successful in their work assignments?

2. Were they satisfied with the work related growth of their GED employees.

3. How did they compare their GED employees with their traditional diploma graduates concerning their employee training programs. (p.5)

The data gathered from these surveys was converted into percentages and presented in tables.

Summary of Findings

As a result of the data gathered the authors found the following:

1. Over 50% of the respondents indicated self-satisfaction as their primary reason for taking the GED tests; and additional 40% indicated that they took it in order to qualify for further educational or employment opportunities.

2. The results of the question about whther the GED test provided new opportunities was divided almost evenly with 49.4% saying yes and 45.2% saying no.

3. Nearly 60% indicated their job assignment had not change within two year. However, one third . . . did indicate they experienced a job change within one or two years after their GED test success.

4. Approximately two-thirds of respondents had not gained their present employment as a result of the GED, but 14.6% said the GED was related to successful employment.

5. Employers generally found GED graduates successful in their work assignments. 97% indicated that they were just as satisfied with GED employees as with their regular high school graduates. (p.9-11)

Critique of Study

In comparison to many studies related to outcomes this study did achieve a relatively high response rate from both GED graduates and employers. The absence of the survey instrument in the document and the lack of comparative data may detract from this work's value.

Title

What's Happened to the 4 Million People Who Have Taken the GED Tests Since 1980? A Review of National and Statewide Follow-up Studies

Author(s)

Malizio, A.

Date

1985

Publication Information

Paper presented at the 1985 National Adult Education Conference, Milwaukee, WI.

Overview

The purpose of this paper was to describe some of the major findings of GED follow-up studies conducted between 1980 and 1985.

Methodology

Based on the authors' experiences with studies he has conducted and after reviewing others the he attempts to extrapolate, "What's happened to the 4 million people who have taken the GED Tests?" (p. 1)

Summary Findings

The author suggests the following:

1. 400,000 who were not full time employed at the time of testing, obtained full-time employment for pay within twelve to eighteen months after testing,

2. 600,000 have attended community college,

3. 70,000 have entered the military,

4. 450,000 have received salary increases directly attributable to earning their GED credential,

5. 2,000,000 have participated in postsecondary education and training beyond the high school level,

6. 3.5 million have earned their high school equivalency credential, and

7. 150,000 have attended four-year colleges or universities. (p. 2)

Critique of Study

This study was not empirical and some of the extrapolation is somewhat mysterious. However, because it essentially addresses outcomes in a very broad way, it was included here.

Title

Maryland GED Graduates: Changes in Education, Employment, and Perceptions of Self-Worth

Author(s)

Reed, N. V.

Date

1985

Publication Information

Baltimore, Maryland : Maryland State Department of Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service, No. ED 252 650).

Overview

This study examined employment and educational activities of Maryland GED Graduates in order to obtain essential baseline data to:

1. analyze instructional needs,

2. determine program policies and appropriate funding level requests,

3. provide various interested publics with timely program data,

4. prepare accurate and effective program data, and

5. strengthen support for adult high school credential programs in the state. (p.1)

Methodology

The survey was mailed to 1,400 Maryland High School GED graduates from the years 1981 and 1982. 544 responses were received for an adjusted response rate of 45%. The survey consisted of two instruments with 40 selected response items as well as a section for comments or suggestions. Respondents used a machine readable response sheet in completing the survey. These instruments were developed jointly by the GED Testing Service of the American Council on Education and the MSDE. Analyses consisted of computing frequencies and percentages for all items and cross tabulations and significance tests for selected variables. The data sought in this study were:

1. General demographic information on recent GED graduates,

2. any changes in education, employment and perceptions of self-worth that occurred as a result of earning the diploma, and

3. student attitudes toward GED instruction. (p.1)

Summary of Findings

A total of 264 of the respondents, 75% of those employed at the time of the survey, reported a modest increase in pay, with 101 attributing their increases directly to earning their diploma. Successful completion of the GED also appeared to have a positive effect on the graduates' future educational pursuits, 44% of the respondents either were enrolled or had taken classes after taking the GED. An additional 22% indicated that they intended to participate in a formal educational activity in the future. In the area of self-worth, 73% reported increased confidence in their abilities and 93% felt the GED had given them a second chance. Finally, 43% of those surveyed said that they would not have attempted to earn their high school diploma if the GED program were not available.

Critique of Study

This study was conducted by random sample, but the researcher does warn of the threat of response bias as a result of both the low response rate and the demographic makeup of the respondents. Furthermore, with only two or three years elapsing between the time of graduation and the survey, the accrual of benefits to the graduates may have been limited.

This study did provide baseline data as sought. For the purpose of examining the outcomes of the GED that data is relevant.

Title

Perception of program benefits ABE/GED in Washington State: A follow-up study

Author(s)

Thompson, H.

Date

1985

Publication Information

Unpublished Masters Thesis, Washington State University

Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine if obtaining a GED Certificate contributed to the attainment of the federally funded ABE program outcomes. Those three outcomes are: (a) employment, (b) productivity, and (c) responsibility.

Methodology

This descriptive study was conducted by obtaining data from two sources: a survey of 1,000 selected 1982 GED graduates, and from information gathered from the GED State Examiner. The survey instrument included 12 selected-response items and four open-ended questions for those who participated in a GED preparation program. The data derived from the questionnaires were analyzed and frequencies and percentages were computed. A total of 290 questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 29%.

Summary of Findings

As a result of the data gathered, the authors found the following:

1. At the time of taking the GED tests 63% of the respondents indicated further schooling as their major goal. Employment related reasons comprised 18% of responses.

2. 23% of respondents reported an increase in income while 56% reported no change.

3. 46% of respondents received direct benefits from obtaining a GED in the area of employment. 48% said they experienced an increased effect in occupational advancement. 60% were employed either full or part time.

4. In terms of self esteem, 84% said that they had improved their self satisfaction, 46% their basic skills, 80% their self worth, and 72% increased their interest in education by completing the GED.

Critique of Study

This study was conducted as a state-wide survey of GED program benefits. The methodology appears sound. However the 29% response rate is consistent with other similar studies. The low response rate, though not unusual in such studies, leaves open the possibility of response bias.

Title

Benefits and Disappointments from Participation in the Alberta High School Equivalency Program

Author(s)

Carbol, B. & Maguire, T.

Date

1986

Publication Information

The Alberta Journal of Educational Research, 32, 67-76.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of the benefits of the Alberta High School Equivalency Program (AHEP) of both successful and unsuccessful participants in the program. AHEP offers two alternative high school equivalency options; one is the GED tests and the other is an assessment of educationally relevant personal factors which may result in the awarding of a high school equivalency diploma to those qualified. Between 1981 and 1983 over 5,000 equivalency diplomas were granted and 85% were based on GED test scores.

Methodology

In Alberta, between December, 1981 and December, 1983, 4,333 persons successfully completed the high school GED, 802 failed the GED, and 822 received their diploma through the alternate route. For the purposes of this study, 200 persons were randomly selected from each of these groups to receive a questionnaire.

Two survey instruments were constructed for the study, one for those who took the GED and one for those who did not take the GED. The instruments addressed the following questions:

1. What are the educational, vocational, and demographic characteristics of program applicants?

2. Why did people apply to the program?

3. What educational and employment benefits were anticipated?

4. What benefits were realized?

5. How do the perceptions relate to group membership? (p.69)

The adjusted response rate for the GED-pass group was 67%, for the GED-fail group 46%, and for the non-GED group 70%.

Data analysis of the findings was conducted in three stages; (a) Response frequencies for each item in the two instruments were determined. (b) Items which were responded to by individuals across the three groups were subjected to cross-tabulation analysis to investigate relationships among the demographic and group membership variables and the perceptions of respondents concerning program benefits and disappointments. Chi-square tests of interdependence were used to determine the statistical significance of the relationships. (c) One-way multivariate analysis of variance was used to test the relationship of demographic characteristics of the GED groups and performance on the tests. (p. 69)

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered the author found the following:

1. There were discrepancies between the expectations and benefits of successfully completing the GED; violations of expectations in the area of employment and education were widely reported. For example, 43 of 113 respondents indicated that passing the GED would help them get a job while only 11 actually did get jobs.

2. The most frequently reported benefit was self-satisfaction.

On the basis of the data gathered the authors conclude that " While the extent to which the AHEP assists individuals in meeting their personal educational and vocational goals, the value of the personal benefits received should not be underestimated" (pp. 74-75).

Critique of Study

This study of outcomes is balanced and well done. The methodology appears sound but the inclusion of the survey instruments would have been helpful. The response rate to the questionnaire exceeds that of many similar works.

Title

Continuing Research on the General Educational Development Examination: Florida Program

Author(s)

Grise, P. & Klein, J.

Date

1986

Publication Information

Center for Needs Assessment and Planning, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to compare the success of GED and regular high school graduates at community colleges in Florida.

Methodology

A survey was mailed to the registrars at each of Florida's 28 community colleges. The survey sought information on the admission, graduation, enrollment , and success of GED and traditional high school graduates. A total of 10 responses were received from the 28 schools.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered, the authors found the following:

1. Only 26% of GED graduates completed and graduated from community college programs while 49% of traditional high school graduates were successful.

2. There were no significant differences in the overall grade point averages of the GED and traditional high school graduates.

On the basis of these findings, the authors conclude, "overall, it appears that GED graduates are successfully achieving the type of higher education they seek from Florida's junior colleges" (p. 19).

Critique of Study

The authors recognized that they were working with sample population from the outset of their research. The fact that only 10 of the 28 schools responded to the survey further weakens the study. The study does, however, include some results that are relevant to the outcomes of the GED.

Title

Performance of GED Holders Enrolled at the University of Wisconsin's Thirteen Campuses: 1979-1985

Author(s)

Quinn, L.M.

Date

1986

Publication Information

University of Wisconsin Employment & Training Institute. Madison, WI.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to investigate the performance of all GED certificate holders who enrolled at the thirteen universities of the University of Wisconsin from the fall of 1979 through the fall of 1984.

Methodology

The data gathered for this study were obtained by acquiring the transcripts of all GED holders who enrolled in the University of Wisconsin system during the designated time period. A total of 5,479 records were processed by the University of Wisconsin Centers at Milwaukee and Parkside at Madison, and the Employment & Training Institute. The resulting data were analyzed by a variety of procedures and assembled into scattergrams, tables and graphs for presentation.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered the author found:

1. In all schools there were GED students who performed well.

2. At the Milwaukee campus GED holders performed worse than regular high school graduates in all areas including grades, credits earned, and semesters completed. At the Madison campus GED holders who had completed high school geometry and algebra had first semester grades higher than high school graduates from the bottom half of their high school class.

3. Retention was a problem for GED holders at each of the institutions. Of those who enrolled for the first time in the 1979-80 school year only 4% had graduated by the spring of 1985.

4. Of the 1,982 GED holders who left college before graduation, 35% earned no credits and 85% did not reach their sophomore year. (p.iii)

Critique of Study

This was a very ambitious study that sought to give a more complete picture of GED holders performance in college than many previous works. The data collection method was appropriate. The study is a presentation of descriptive data without interpretation. A subsequent paper, *Are GED holders ready for postsecondary education,* Quinn and Haberman, Metropolitan Education, 1(2), 72-82. Feburary ,1986 (#34) does provide conclusions.

Title Are GED Holders Ready for Postsecondary Education?

Author(s) Quinn, L. & Haberman, M.

Date 1986

Publication Information Metropolitan Education, 1, (2), 72-82.

Note
This study is an extended report of the data in Document No.33 in which the authors draw the conclusion that passing the GED is not as good as finishing high school for the purpose of postsecondary education.

Title

The Benefits of GED Graduation and a Typology of Graduates

Author(s)

Valentine, T.& Darkenwald, G.G.

Date

1986

Publication Information

Adult Education Quarterly, 37, 23-37

Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine the benefits of passing the GED tests. In addition, the study delineated five principle types of GED graduates.

Methodology

The study was conducted by randomly selecting 300 of the 677 New Jersey GED graduates who passed the tests between January 1 and April 31, 1982 and who fulfilled three additional criteria; (1) they had participated in a GED preparation course, (2) they took the test in English, and (3) they were not incarcerated or in the military. A survey instrument consisting of 24 selected response items and one open-ended question was mailed to the 300 subjects. A total of 172 questionnaires were returned for an unadjusted response rate of 57.3%; 40 questionnaires were returned as undeliverable, yielding an adjusted response rate of 70.6%. The survey instrument is included in the appendix.

Three research questions guided the study:

1. What percentage of those who prepare for and pass the GED obtain specific benefits?

2. Can the specific benefits be grouped into broader, more meaningful, empirically-based categories (or factors) of benefits?

3. Can the population of graduates be partitioned into types (or clusters) on the basis of observed benefits? (p. 24)

The data gathered in this study were analyzed using percentages, dependent t-tests, Chi-Square analysis, factor analysis, and cluster analysis.

Summary of Findings

In analyzing the findings concerning the benefits of the GED, the authors present a table reflecting both the percentage of the benefits accrued to the entire reporting population (N 172) and those accruing to the percent of those respondents actually eligible to receive that benefit. In addition to the benefits accrued to the respondents, the authors constructed a typology of graduates in order to provide increased clarity to the analysis. The five types of graduates and their percentage of the total sample were:

1. Type One graduates were distinguished by a very high level of Further Education and comprised 19% of the sample.

2. Type Two graduates were distinguished by a high level of Self Improvement and a moderately high level of Job Advancement and comprised 37% of the sample.

3. Type Three graduates were distinguished by Increased Income and comprised 17% of the sample.

4. Type Four graduates were distinguished by a high level of Job Advancement and comprised 15% of the sample.

5. Type Five graduates were distinguished by low levels on all four factors of benefits and comprised 12% of the sample.

As a result of the findings, the authors conclude "that there are substantial benefits to be obtained from preparing for and passing the GED".

Critique of Study

This is a highly detailed study and the typology of graduates presented adds clarity to the issue of GED benefits. The authors recognize the limitations of the study due to the relatively small sample and recommend replication to allow increased generalizabilty.

Title Continuing Research on the General Educational Development Examination: Florida Program

Author(s) Grise, P. & Klein, J.

Date 1987

Publication GED Research Brief No. 12. GED Testing Service, One Dupont Circle, Washington D.C. 20036.

Note
While this document is virtually the same as Document No.32, in this version it is found that traditional high school graduates have significantly higher community college GPA than GED graduates.

Title

Military Enlistment Policy and Educational Credentials: Evaluation and Improvement

Author(s)

Laurence, J. H.

Date

1987

Publication Information

Human Resources Research Organization, 1100 South Washington Street, Alexandria, Virginia, 2314-4499.Final Report No.87-33.

Overview

This study was conducted in order to provide the Department of Defense with data relevant to "evaluating and improving education screening procedures " (p. iii), for the U.S. Armed Forces.

Methodology

The data gathered for analysis in this study came from two sources, the Human Resources Research Organization's Educational and Biographical Information Survey and the Defense Manpower Data Center files. The study group consisted of 78,000 enlistment applicants and new recruits from all branches of the military between February and June 1983.This group was tracked through their first term of military service. The individuals were administered the Educational and Biographical Information Survey which contains 34 structured-response items which yielded 121 items of information. The resulting data were linked with the Defense Manpower Data Center data on their demographics and military performance. The variable examined in this study was the military attrition (dropout) rate of regular high school graduates , GED graduates and other high school credential holders (including other alternative equivalency holders, adult education diploma holders, and correspondence school diploma holders), and those with no credential.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered for this study the author found that:

1. The attrition rate for high school graduates was 23%.

2. The attrition rate for GED holders was 39%.

3. The rates for other alternative credential groups was 36% for other equivalency holders, 37% for adult education diploma holders, and 30% for correspondence school diploma holders.

4. The attrition rate for those with no credential was 45%.

5. No better attrition predictor than educational credential has been found. (p.iv)

Critique of Study

Because of the high cost of training military personnel, the issue of attrition is one of great importance to the military. This study provides a highly detailed accounting of attrition rates based on educational credentials. The methodology appears sound and the large study group lends credibility to the findings.

Title

A Study of Enrollees at Casper College for the Fall Semester, 1986, Who Were Admitted as High School Equivalency Holders Rather Than as Students Who Were Awarded a High School Diploma

Author(s)

Means, R.

Date

1987

Publication Information

A report prepared for the administration of Casper College, Casper, Wyoming.

Overview

This report traces the academic progress of students admitted to the college in based on the GED tests in the fall of 1986.

Methodology

This report attempt to describe in detail eight groups of people:

1. GED enrollees who withdrew prior to the end of the first semester.

2. GED enrollees who received all "F's" at the end of the first semester.

3. GED enrollees who completed the semester, for whom GED scores were available.

4. GED enrollees who completed the semester, but for whom no GED scores were available.

5. GED enrollees who were classified as sophomores who completed the semester, and for whom GED scores were available.

6. GED enrollees who were classified as sophomores, and for whom no GED scores were available.

7. GED enrollees who had GED composite test scores at or above a standard score of 60 (85th percentile).

8. Sophomores at Casper College who had GED composite scores at or above standard score of 60 (85th percentile).

Tables were constructed that showed percentages and frequencies in the eight areas and discussion was conducted for each.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered, the author finds that:

1. The mean GPA for GED holders was 2.31 and 2.34 for all freshman.

2. Of sophomore GED holders 95.8% were in good academic standing, while 85.8% of the entire sophomore class held the same status.

3. Freshmen with GED composite scores greater than 60 had higher median GPA's and a higher incidence of attaining good academic standing than the total freshman population.

Based on these findings the author concludes that "there is not a great difference in the mean GPA's made by freshman and high school equivalency holders and the total freshman and sophomore populations within the study" (p. 14).

Critique of Study

Although this study uses the entire college population of a single year, generalizability across time or colleges is limited. This study was intended to be an internal report and as such its findings and conclusions may be difficult to uncover. For example,while the good standing rate of sophomores is impressive, it must be remembered that most of the unsuccessful GED students would have never received sophomore status.

Title

A Study of the Impact of the GED Diploma in Relation to Recipient's Self Esteem, Upward Job Mobility, Education and Training Activities Influence in the Family Unit, and Earning Potential

Author(s)

Miller, K.R.

Date

1987

Publication Information

Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceived benefits derived from the successful completion of the GED. The descriptive study was designed to collect data in response to six research questions:

1 Do people who passed the GED test feel that the experience has helped them to increase their self esteem ?

2 Do people who passed the GED test feel this experience has increased their influence in the family unit ?

3 Have recipients' upward job mobility been increased as a result of earning their GED credential ?

4. Have recipients' educational and training activities been increased as a result of earnings their GED credential ?

5. Have recipients' become more involved in social, political, economic and environmental issues on all levels since receiving their GED credential?

6. Is their a relationship between the benefits derived from a successful GED experience and selected demographic variables? (p. 3)

Methodology

The study population was a random sample of 2,000, 1983 Pennsylvania GED graduates drawn from a total GED graduate population of 20,000. Of the 2,000 mailed, 635 surveys were returned and 612, or 30.6% were scored. The survey instrument consisted of a 1984 National Follow-Up Survey created by the General Educational Development Testing Service of the American Council on Education, merged with a survey instrument created by the author in consultation with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania , and Temple University. The survey instrument consisted of 40 selected response items and a section for comments and suggestions.

The data derived from the survey were analyzed and tested using, chi square.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered, the author found the following:

1. 70% of the respondents reported an increase in self esteem,

2. more than 85% had told their relatives of their success and 90% felt that their families shared their pleasure in achieving the GED,

3. only 30% said that they assumed more responsibilty with their family, and

4. while the actual benefits of obtaining the GED credential in relation to upward job mobility were less than expected full time employment did increase from 31.7% to 48% and the unemployment rate of graduates decreased from 18.8% to 10.1%. (pp. 78-88)

Critique of Study

In the introduction of the study the author notes that few wide ranging analyses of the outcomes of the GED had been conducted. The analysis of the data provides a description of those outcomes in the state of Pennsylvania for the year 1983. This study can be valuable in the consideration of GED outcomes, it is notable that a statewide sample of 2,000 graduates was used.

Title Employment of Young GED Recipients

Author(s) Passmore, D.L.

Date 1987

Publication Information GED Research Brief #14, September 1987, GED Testing Service, One Dupont Circle, Washington D.C., 20036

Overview The purpose of this study was "to determine the labor market consequences of acquiring a GED degree for young people in 1985" (p.1).

Methodology Data from the youth cohort of the National Longitudinal Survey of Market Experience conducted for the U.S. Department of Labor by the Center for Human Resources Research were analyzed. The target population of the youth cohort were non-institutionalized persons who were between 14 and 21 years old on January 29, 1979. A total of 14,574 youths were selected for the study with 12,686 (87%) having completed an interview by 1979. This study used data provided by 9,436 respondents from the 1979 group.

The data gathered were compiled into tables using regression equations and crosstabulations.

Summary of Findings On the basis of the data gathered, the author found:

1. GED recipients were more likely to be employed . . . in 1985 than people without a GED or high school diploma.

2. The average hourly wage of employed youth is ordered the same way. Their labor force participation and employment-high school graduates have the highest rates, followed by GED recipients,and, then, by youths without a GED or diploma. (p.3)

Critique of Study

This was a well done study which examined a sizeable study population.

Title: Study on the Relationship Between Completion of the \General Educational Development Tests and Continuance on Public Assistance

Author(s): Webb, J. & Scheideman, G.

Date: 1987

Publication Information: Spokane WA.: Community Colleges of Spokane, Institute for Extended Learning.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine if there is a relationship between the completion of the GED tests and continuance on public assistance.

Methodology

This study was conducted by obtaining a list of 452 who completed their high school GED between January 10, 1985 and June 13, 1986. One hundred individuals were selected by simple random sampling. By using the individuals social security numbers, Washington Department of Social and Health Services records were cross checked to see whether or not these students were still receiving public assistance. In addition, the data were used to determine if their was a relationship in time existed between completion of the GED program and going off public assistance.

Summary Findings

On the basis of the data gathered the following findings were made::

1. 10 of the 100 people in the sample went off public assistance during the first six months following completion of the GED.

2. 22 of the 100 people in the sample went off public assistance in less than nine months following completion of the GED.

Critique of Study

The authors of this report are quick to point out that there are major problems with the validity of their work. This study is included because it does contain primary information on one possible outcome of the GED.

Title

The GED Certificate as an Alternative Credential in the U.S. Army Enlistment Process

Author(s)

Lyle, B.

Date

1988

Publication Information

Adult Literacy and Basic Education, 12, 142-150.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine military enlistees to identify possible predictors among GED graduates for successful completion of military obligations. (p.142)

Methodology

This study was done by reviewing and analyzing data relating to two groups of Army enlistees in 1984 who entered the service with GED's. One group consisted of a combination of enlistees still in the service and those having completed their obligation; the non-attrition group was the second group and was made up of enlistees who had left the military prior to the completion of their first term of service . Data were obtained from the GED Testing Service and the Defense Manpower Data Center.

A total of 3,979 soldiers were identified; 1,894 in the attrition group and 2,085 in the non-attrition group. Each soldier in the study was measured with two screening instruments, the GED and the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). A t-test for two independent samples was used to determine whether the average score for the two groups differed significantly. Stepwise discriminant analysis was also used to investigate differences between the two groups.

Summary of Findings

Based on the results of the authors' analysis the following was found:

1. A primary screening element of the enlistment process is the composite measure of the four tests of the ASVAB, the Armed Forces Qualification Test (AFQT). No significant difference was found in the AFQT mean percentile for the two groups.

2. No significant difference was found between the groups when their scores were analyzed on several tests including the General Science Test, the Arithmetic Reasoning Test, the World Knowledge Test, and others.

3. Four subtests and the GED score did produce a significant difference. The attrition group had a mean score of 18.73 while the non-attrition group had a mean score of 19.38.

4. When scores on the GED were analyzed for both groups, a significant difference was found. The attrition group had a mean score of 264.16 compared to 267.24 for the non-attrition group.

Critique of Study

This study was conducted primarily for the use of the military , but it does offer insight into some outcomes of the GED that may be useful. The data analysis appears sound and the conclusions are clearly stated.

Title: Follow-up of GED completers: An Analysis of Eight Studies in the U.S. and Canada

Author(s): Sabino, M.J. & Seaman D.F.

Date: 1988

Publication Information Lifelong Learning, 11 (7), 4-6.

Overview

This study attempted to compile, analyze, and compare data from national,state, and provincial follow-up reports on GED completers.

Methodology:

The study was conducted by contacting each of the 50 state departments of education and soliciting any follow-up data they might have concerning those who had completed the GED. Data from six states and one Canadian province were collected and a seventh report, a national survey, was included in the study. The data from the state and provincial reports were analyzed by means of content analysis and compared to the national survey when possible.

Summary of Findings:

On the basis of the data gathered in this cross study the authors found that:

1. Most of the studies examined employment rates. The increase in employment ranged from a low of 8% to a high of 26%.

2. All of the studies included information about education and training.

3. Five of the studies investigated how the GED certificate had helped the participants in their personal growth.

4. Two states found that the return on investment from the GED program to the states was substantial.

Critique of Study:

To some extent this is more a study of which outcomes have been studied than what levels of outcomes have been achieved.

Title

A Follow-up Study of 1987 GED Graduates in Mississippi

Author(s)

Box, W.C & Thomas, E.L.

Date

1989

Publication Information

Mississippi State Department of Education, Office of Vocational, Technical , and Adult Education.P.O. Box 771, Jackson, Mississippi 39205.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to gather information about 1987 Mississippi GED graduates.

Methodology

This study was conducted by randomly selecting 500 of the 8,887 individuals in Mississippi who passed the GED tests in 1987. Addresses were obtained from the computer files of the State Department of Education and the questionnaires were mailed. A total of 104 questionnaires were returned as undeliverable and 117 were returned completed for an adjusted response rate of 29.5%. The survey instrument consisted of 18 selected response items and one open-ended question for comments about the impact of the GED on the respondent. The survey instrument was included. The data obtained from the survey were analyzed, and percents, frequencies, cumulative percents, and crosstabulations were calculated and presented in tables.

Summary of Findings

As a result of the analysis of data, the authors found that:

1. Most participants took the test for personal satisfaction, for further education, or for employment.

2. 25% indicated that their income had increased as a result of passing the GED while 30% said income was not a consideration as they were not employed for pay.

3. The comments were 95% positive toward the GED. (p. v)

Critique of Study

The goal of this study was to gather information to provide the State GED Office with "information that would facilitate improvement and promotion of the GED testing program in Mississippi" (p.1). The methodology appears sound and the response rate, while small, is consistent with similar studies. There is no specific section on findings or conclusions other that those presented in the abstract and those that accompany each table.

Title

A Mandate for the 90's: Research on Success of General Educational Development (GED) Recipients in Higher Education

Author(s)

Turner, A.P.

Date

1989

Publication Information

Center for Alternative Studies.
North Shore Community ,College Beverly, MA.

Rationale:

The purpose of this study was to collect and analyze data pertaining to the success of GED recipients who had enrolled at North Shore Community College in 1986.

Methodology:

The study was conducted by means of two surveys, one of the 160 GED students and one of the 18 faculty members at the school. A total of 87 students and all 18 faculty members responded to their respective surveys. The student survey included sections on background information, information about the student before and after the GED, and one on helping others with the GED. The responses to the student survey were analyzed to identify the most significant factors influencing success of GED students in higher education, and other factors to consider in program planning. The faculty survey elicited information about their perceptions of the reasons for GED recipients success. The results of these two surveys were compared to match faculty staff perceptions of successful behaviors.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered, the following findings concerning the success of the GED graduates were made:

1. Analysis of all data evidenced that the GED recipients are enrolled, matriculated and earning above average cumulative grade point averages in higher education.

2. Academic performance was not influenced by enrollment in the day or evening program.

3. Self-motivation is a key factor in college success for students starting with a GED.

4. The referral/support of family/friends and college staff is significant in maximizing GED completion, enrollment , and continued attendance in college. (p. 8)

Critiuqe of Study

This study does examine an aspect of GED outcomes. It is important to note that the sample is confined to one institution. The study had a high response rate of 54.4% for the student survey and 100% for the faculty survey. The survey instruments are included in the study.

Title Labor Supply of Young GED Recipients

Author(s) Olsen, N. & Passmore, D.

Date 1989

Publication Information Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between holding a GED credential and the hours worked in 1985 by young married people in the United States. Two research questions were considered for this study:

1. What was the relationship between holding a GED credential and the probability of being employed in 1985 among married young people in the United States?

2. What was the relationship between holding a GED credential and the hours worked by employed, married young people in the United States? (p. 4)

Methodology

Data from the youth cohort of the National Longitudinal Survey of Market Experience conducted for the U.S. Department of Labor by the Center for Human Resources Research were analyzed. The target population of the youth cohort was non-institutionalized persons who were between 41 and 21 years old on January 29, 1979. A total of 14,574 youths were selected for the study with 12,686 (87%) having completed an interview by 1979.

In 1986, 9,136 married members of the youth cohort were surveyed and the responses were used to examine the relationship between holding the GED and the hours worked and to generalize the results. These results were analyzed within the framework of labor supply theory.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered in this study the authors find that"Obtaining a GED is not associated with the changes in probability of being employed in 1985 among married young people in the United States" (p. 33).

Critique of Study:

This is a well-done study based on a wide-ranging data set. The findings concerning outcomes are limited but the recommendations for both research and program implementation are valuable. Rather than use the results of this study to dismantle GED preparation and testing programs, the authors suggest that they should be used to improve both future research design and the implementation of those programs. The major limitation of the study is the one-year time frame investigated.

Title	Does Obtaining a GED Affect Employment and Income
Author(s)	Olsen, N. & Passmore, D.
Date	1989
Publication Information	Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, CA.

NOTE
Although this piece does not meet the selection criteria established, it is cataloged here because of its importance to anyone studying GED outcomes. It is contains both a literature review and methodological critique of existing studies of outcomes.

Title

The Relationship Between Benefits from a GED Certificate and Age Group (Life Cycle Phase) of the Recipient

Author(s)

Killpatrick, P.T.

Date

1990

Publication Information

Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Oregon State University, Corvallis, OR.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to "determine the relationship between self-esteem, employment , and educational benefits from a GED certificate and the age group (life cycle phase) of the recipient" (p. 7). Three null hypotheses addressed this issue:

1. There is no relationship between age and increased attendance benefit in post-GED education after receiving a GED certificate

2. There is no relationship between age and increased employment status benefit status after receiving a GED certificate.

3. There is no relationship between age and increased self-esteem benefit after receiving a GED certificate. (p. 7)

Methodology

This study was conducted by sampling a group of 194 GED graduates from five Oregon community colleges who completed the tests between July and October, 1987. "Of the 194 questionnaires mailed, 115 were returned completed and 29 were returned undeliverable...for an adjusted response rate of 70%"(p. 33). The survey instrument was based on the format used by Valentine & Darkenwald ,*"The Benefits of GED Graduation and a Typology of Graduates" (1986)* and is included as an appendix. The instrument consists of selected response items and open-ended questions. The author notes that "a $1.00 incentive was included with the questionnaire in an attempt to maximize responses"(p. 34).

Analysis of the data was performed by cross-tabulations, contingency tables, chi-squared, and frequency distribution.

Summary of Findings

All three of the null hypotheses were accepted; that is to say that , based on Chi-square analyses there was no relationship between life-cycle phase of the graduate and postsecondary education, employment, status or age group. The authors then went on to determine which age groups were most likely to receive the given benefits. On the basis of the data gathered the author found the following:

1. For educational benefits, the 16-18, 19-22, and 23-28 age groups had the highest percentage levels (82%, 88%, 86%, respectively).

2. For pre- and post -GED employment benefits, the 16-18, 23-28, and the 51+age groups had the highest percentage levels (36%, 29%, and 33% respectively).

3. For job promotion, the 16-18, 23-28, 35-43, and 44-50 age groups had the highest percentage levels (29%, 25%,25%, and 33% respectively).

4. For securing a better job, the 16-18, 19-22 and 44-50 age group had the highest percentage levels (67%, 47%, and 50 % respectively).

5. In self-esteem 100% of respondents in age groups 29-51+ reported improvement in self-esteem, (p. 47-51).

The author concludes, "The findings of this study indicate that factors other than age may influence the success achieved by GED graduates. The implication is that GED acquisition holds no guarantee for educational, economic or personal improvement, regardless of the recipient's age." (p. 51)

Critique of Study

This study sought to determine the relationship benefits gained from acquiring a GED certificate and age group. The impact of the high response rate may be limited by the small study population. The methodology and analysis procedures seem appropriate.

Title

Success Study: GED Certificate Students in New Brunswick Community College Programs

Author(s)

New Brunswick Department of Advanced Education and Training.

Date

1990

Publication Information

Department of Advanced Education and Training. 125 Hilton Road, Industrial Park, Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine the success rate of GED holders enrolled in five New Brunswick community colleges in the 1989-1990 school year. The study also sought to compare the success rate of the GED students with traditional high school graduates.

Methodology

The data for this study were gathered in two ways: (1) All students who received GED certificates from the Province and enrolled in the Anglophone New Brunswick Community Colleges during 1989-1990 were identified; (2) The records of those students were examined.The data derived from these sources were arranged in tabular form and presented as frequencies and percentages.

Summary of Findings

Based on the data examined, the author found that:

1. In terms of termination status, GED recipients did slightly better that traditional graduates with 17.4% of GED students and 20.4% of traditional students withdrawing.

2. In terms of success, 73.9% of GED holders successfully completed their programs. No comparative data was available for this category.

As a result of these findings it was concluded that GED students who entered New Brunswick Community Colleges did as well as or better than traditional high school graduates.

Critique of Study

This was a study of modest proportions, the number of GED graduates studied was 145 and the entire student population was 10,404. The data presentations of conclusions are brief, but are positive toward the GED.

Title

The Value and Impact of the GED Certificate for 1987 Recipients

Author(s)

New Brunswick Department of Advanced Education and Training.

Date

1990

Publication Information

Department of Advanced Education and Training. 125 Hilton Road, Industrial Park, Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of receiving the GED on those 1987 New Brunswick residents who passed the GED tests.

Methodology

This study was conducted by mailed questionnaire. The surveys were sent to 1,400 of the 1,485 person issued a GED certificate in 1987. Of the total sent, 398 were returned as undeliverable and 586 were returned for an adjusted response rate of 58%. The survey instrument consisted of 17 selected response items and two open ended questions asking for anecdotal information about the impact of the GED and suggestions for the program. The survey instrument was included. The data were analyzed and arranged into tables reflecting frequencies and percentages.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered the authors reported that:

1. Full-time and part-time employment increased 12.5 % for those who passed the GED.

2. Unemployment decreased 45.8% for those who passed the GED.

3. 36% of the respondents took further training.

As a result of these findings and the anecdotal information provided, the authors conclude that, "the receipt of the GED has indeed made and improvement in the lives of the majority (of graduates). This improvement may have been economic, social, personal, or perhaps only perceived, but it is clear that the GED testing service is a valuable asset to many citizens of our province" (p. 19).

Critique of Study

The methodology employed in this study is sound. The adjusted response rate of 58% is higher than many similar studies. The statistical analysis of the data is minimal while there is an extensive section devoted to the anecdotal information provided by the respondents. Although the statements of findings in #1 & #2 seem to conflict, the full data are available in the report. As with most studies of this type, one must be cautious of the generalizabiltiy of the results as there is no comparative data presented for either the unsuccessful GED candidate or the general population.

Title

The Nonequivalence of High School Equivalents

Author(s)

Cameron, S.V. & Heckman J.J.

Date

1991

Publication Information

Working paper No. 3804. National Bureau of Economic Research, 1050 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to compare the economic consequences of traditional high school graduation and graduation by means of high school equivalency exam.

Methodology

The data gathered for this study were derived from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth. Data were obtained for the group that was 13-20 years old in 1978. he subjects in this group also took the Armed Services Vocational Apptitude Battery in 1980. A summary of the varibles included is included in the appendix.

The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth population "waves" from 1979-1987 that consisted of a "random sample of 6,111 U.S. youths and a supplemental sample of 5,296 randomly chosen black, Hispanic, economically-disadvantaged youths"(p.1, appendix), was used for this study. The Cameron and Heckman employed sub-sample from the larger data set that consisted of "males who were in the random sample, the black supplemental sample, and the supplemental Hispanic sample" (p.1, appendix).

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered the authors find the following:

1.High school graduates have statistically higher mean test scores on the Armed Forces Qualifying Test than do GED holders, who in turn, have statistically higher mean test scores than do high school dropouts. (p.12)

2. The mean labor market status of high school dropouts is the same as that for GED recipients. . .Both groups are inferior to high school graduates in terms of hours, wages, weeks worked and length of time in their current jobs. (p.13)

3. Using conventional statistical levels, the NLSY data strongly reject the hypothesis that GED recipients are the labor market equals of high school graduates. (p. 18)

The authors conclude by stating, "The main conclusion of this paper is that exam-certified high school equivalents are statistically indistinguishable from high school dropouts. Both dropouts and exam-certified equivalents have comparably poor wages, earnings, hours of work, unemployment experiences,and job tenure" (p.24).

Critique of Study

This is a highly detailed study conducted by economists. Broad conclusions about the GED are made on the basis of a single survey group and the authors do note that," The sampling frame of the NLSY forced us to confine our attention to the early stages of adulthood. It is possible that GED recipients and high school dropouts will look more dissimilar at older ages and that high school graduates will look more similar" (p 25).

Title

Follow-Up Study of GED Graduates in Georgia

Author(s)

Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education .

Date

1991

Publication Information

Georgia Department of Technical and Adult Education, 660 South Tower, One CNN Center, Atlanta, GA, 30303-2705.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to provide information for the improvement, promotion, and expansion of the Georgia GED program. While not specifically an outcome study, several of the selected response items do address that issue.

Methodology

This study was conducted by randomly selecting 1,000 of the 10,761 individuals who successfully completed the GED tests in 1989 in the state. A questionnaire was mailed to those selected and a total of 300 responses were received for a response rate of 33%. The survey instrument is included in the study. The data gathered were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, cumulative percentages, and crosstabulations.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered the authors found the following:

1. After receiving the GED Equivalency Certificate, most of the respondents were employed full-time for pay.

2. Yearly income did not change after receiving the GED Equivalency Certificate.

3. A large majority of the respondents expressed an increase in self-confidence after receiving the GED Equivalency Certificate.

Critique of Study

While not strictly concerned with outcomes, this provides some relevant findings. As in many studies of this nature there is a relatively small response rate.

Title

A Study of Differences in Employment, Salary, and Enrollment in Post-Secondary Education Associated with Completion of the General Educational Development (GED) Exam

Author(s)

Goodwin, J.A.

Date

1991

Publication Information

Unpublished doctoral dissertation submitted to the Department of Educational Foundations and Policy Studies, Florida State University, Tallahassee, FL.

Overview

"The purpose of this study was to examine the differences in salary, employment, and enrollment in post-secondary education associated with completion of the GED examination" (p. 62). Three of the six research questions posed apply to outcomes:

1. Does possession of a GED credential increase the likelihood of obtaining employment?

2. Does possession of a GED credential increase the likelihood of improving salary?

3. Does possession of a GED credential increase the likelihood of enrolling in further educational programs? (p.6)

Methodology

This study was conducted by randomly selecting 400 people who successfully completed the GED exam between July, 1988 and June, 1990 in New York State. A total of 96 responses were received for a response rate of 28%. The survey instrument consisted of 27 items, 21 selected response and 6 open-ended questions. The survey instrument was included.

Analysis of the data was performed by frequency distributions, means, standard deviations, and multiple regression techniques.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered in this study, the author found the following:

1.There was a decrease in the salary of the respondents during the period of the study.

2. There was an increase in enrollment in post-secondary education and that this may partly explain the decrease in salary.

3. There was no difference in the employment status of the GED graduates .

4. The self-esteem of the respondents increased as a result of successfully completing the GED.

Critique of Study

The author cautions that the study is limited by the nature of the survey instrument and the lack of comparative data. While a 28% response rate is claimed, it is also noted that only 86 questionnaires were completed sufficiently to warrant inclusion in the analysis of data. This low response rate introduces the possiblity of response bias. The methodology appears to be appropriate but the inclusion of relevant statistical data in the summary would have been helpful.

Title

Follow-up Study of 1989 GED Recipients in Wisconsin

Author(s)

Hayes, E.

Date

1991

Publication Information

Madison, WI: Department of Continuing and Vocational Education. University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to answer the following questions:

1. What are the occupational, educational, personal, and social benefits of obtaining a GED for Wisconsin GED recipients?

2. How do Wisconsin recipients vary in the benefits they experience?

3. What are the factors that affect the nature and extent of these benefits? (P.1)

Methodology

The data for this study were gathered by two methods, a mailed questionnaire and telephone interviews. The survey instrument used for the mailing consisted of 65 selected-response items and one open-ended question for opinions and comments about the tests and their impact on the recipient. The survey instrument is included. The questionnaire was mailed to 1,028 GED graduates adults who earned their GED from July through December, 1989. A total of 432 respon se were received for an unadjusted response rate of 42%. 168 were returned as undeliverable, yielding an adjusted response rate of 50.2%

The data gathered were analyzed by a variety of statistical procedures, including frequency distributions, means, chi-squared, t-tests, analysis of variance, and correlational analysis.

Next, the telephone interviews were conducted. The 49 GED graduates were selected from the population of respondents to the mailed survey. Purposive sampling was used to select the interviewees and was designed to permit comparisons between several demographic variables. The data gathered from the interviews were analyzed using qualitative data analysis procedures.

Summary of Findings

As a result of the data gathered, the following was found:

1. GED graduates have varied reasons for earning the credential, with immediate employment a priority for a relatively small proportion of individuals.

2. There are a variety of benefits experienced by GED graduates, both tangible and intangible. The intangible benefits, such as life satisfaction, higher aspirations, and improved self image, are those most widely reported.

3. Occupational advancement and financial security were outcomes for a smaller, but still significant proportion of graduates.

4. Participation in further education and training were reported by a sizeable proportion of respondents. Almost half of those with further education as a primary goal enrolled in a college degree program within two years of GED graduation. (p.56-58)

5. Results of the telephone interviews,"suggested that graduates' adult roles and responsibilties have an impact on the benefits they experience from obtaining the GED credential" (p. i).

Critique of Study

This was a highly detailed study; the research goals were well thought-out, and stated clearly. The researcher alerts us to potential problems caused by the lack of a control group and possible response bias associated with the survey population.

Title

Estimating the Impact of the Increased Earnings Capacity From a Secondary Education on the Future Welfare Recipiency of Female Dropouts

Author(s)

Maloney, T.

Date

1991

Publication Information

Department of Economics, The University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

Overview

This study extends the work reported in document 57. This study sought to estimate,"the potential impact of increased earnings capacity on the future AFDC recipiency among female dropouts" (p. 1-2). This increased earning capacity was estimated at "10.2 to 10.6 for a regular high school diploma, and 6.2 to 6.5 percent for a GED degree" (p. 1).

Methodology

The data gathered for this study were derived from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth sample from 1979. The subsample used in this report was 2,601 women who were in the 20-28 year old age group in 1985. This groups was also given the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery in 1980.

The methodology employed for this study included the construction of econometric models to predict,"the determinants of educational attainment and subsequent AFDC recipiency " (p. 2).

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the models constructed from the available data the author finds that :

1. High school graduates experience lower rates of post-schooling welfare recipiency than observationally equivalent dropouts or GED recipients.

> 2. . . .the AFDC recipiency of the average dropout would be reduced by 3.8 percentage points with a high school diploma and 2.3 percentage points with a GED degree. . . .Although these effects would appear to be substantial, they would eliminate at most one-quarter of the current gap in welfare recipiency between women who have and have not completed their secondary education (p.26).

The author concludes that," in this study we find that in terms of welfare recipiency, GED recipients and dropouts are quite similar" (p. 26).

Critique of Study

The use a single study group may present problems of generalizabilty. The author calls for further study to explore the many possible variables affecting the study group.

Title

Estimating the Returns to a Secondary Education for Female Dropouts

Author(s)

Maloney, T.

Date

1991

Publication Information

Institute for Research on Poverty, Discussion Paper No. 937-91, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Overview

The purpose of this paper was "to estimate the returns to the average female dropout if she were to either complete a regular high school education or GED degree" (p. 2).

Methodology

The data gathered for this study were derived from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth sample from 1979. The subsample used in this report was 2,601 women who were in the 20-28 year old age group in 1985. This groups was also given the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery in 1980.

The methodology employed for this study included the construction of econometric models to "model the process that leads to leads to differences in potential market wage rates and too simulate the possible returns to a secondary education" (p. 37).

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered in this study the author found that "female high school dropouts could increase their potential market wage by 10.2 to 10.9 percent if they completed their regular high school education, or by 6.2 to 6.5 percent if they receive their GED degree" (p. 37).

Critique of Study

This was a highly detailed study based on the construction of econometric models.using available data. The study group is confined to a single survey group and may present problem of generalizabilty of the results.

Title

What Has Happened to Iowa's GED Graduates? Final Report

Author(s)

Iowa Department of Education

Date

1992

Publication Information

State of Iowa, Department of Education. Division of Community Colleges, Bureau of Educational and Student Services, Grimes State Office Building, Des Moines, Iowa, 50319-0416.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to determine the short-term (two-year), intermediate (five-year), and long-term (ten-year) impact of earning a high school equivalency diploma (GED) in Iowa. Three questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does earning a GED diploma provide employment and economic benefits to both individuals and society?

2. To what extent does earning a GED diploma provide quality of life benefits other than those directly related to employment and economic performance?

3. To what extent does the ABE/GED program help learners pass the GED, and are learners satisfied with that program? (p. xii)

Methodology

This study was conducted by identifying GED graduates from the years 1980, 1985, and 1990 and drawing a random sample of 2,500 graduates from each time cohort. A questionnaire consisting of 39 selected response items and one open ended question was designed. This questionnaire included items from the U.S. Census, from surveys conducted by the GED Testing Service, and from previously conducted Iowa studies.

The questionnaire was mailed to 7,500 GED graduates in the spring of 1991. Of these, 2,425 were returned as undeliverable, a total of 1,597 surveys were returned for an overall adjusted response rate of 31%.

The data derived from the questionnaire were analyzed and assembled into tables for comparative purposes.

Summary of Findings

On the basis of the data gathered in the areas of economic and employment benefits, and non-economic benefits the authors concluded the following:

> 1. Employment and economic benefits were measured by thirteen variables. The gains in these variable represent both individual and social benefits. Individuals gained by increasing wealth and security; society gained by enhanced worker productivity, and increased tax base, and a reduction in dependency on publicly subsidized social programs.
>
> 2. Non-economic benefits as well as economic benefits were in evidence. Increased self esteem, community involvement, and enhanced parenting skills were all cited by respondents as important benefits derived from the successful completion of the GED. (p.xxv.)

Critique of Study

This was a well done study. Longitudinal research in the realm of GED outcomes is often called for, but seldom in evidence. While recent studies, based on relatively young subjects, have called into question the economic benefits of the GED, the authors of the Iowa study point out that the long term benefits of the GED have not been measured. The authors do warn of potential response bias based on sample characteristics and the nature of the survey instrument.

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